

President George Washington once said, "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of early wars were treated and appreciated by our nation."

As an Army veteran and a member of the House Armed Services Committee, Congressman Rooney is dedicated to ensuring our service members and veterans receive the benefits they have earned and deserve. Recently, the House passed the "Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009". This bill, which the Congressman voted for, gives Congress greater ability to provide sufficient funding to meet the demand for Veterans Affairs (VA) health care services in future years by allowing funding for the VA medical system one year in advance. This proposal frequently called "Advance Appropriations" is supported by veteran service organizations such as the Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion.

Today our veterans are in the midst of the largest mental health crisis since Vietnam. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs 37% of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan have mental health problems, a nearly 50% increase from the last time the prevalence was calculated. This report coupled with the recent rise in suicide rates by members of our armed services is alarming and requires immediate action.

Congressman Rooney has been a tireless advocate bringing awareness to the growing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) crisis facing our soldiers. Shortly after coming to Congress, Rooney introduced a bill to make it mandatory for all soldiers to receive face-to-face expert and confidential screenings with mental health professionals following deployment. He worked with his fellow House Armed Services Committee members to have language included in the Defense Reauthorization bill to start a pilot project for screening our soldiers.

In May, Rooney sent a bipartisan letter, signed by almost fifty of House colleagues, to the Appropriations Defense Subcommittee asking for an increase in overall funding for mental health programs by \$300 million. As a result, the House passed Defense appropriations bill included \$500 million for Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychological health research, counseling and treatment programs.

Congressman Rooney firmly believes we have a moral obligation to care for those who were

wounded while serving to protect our Country and continues to fight to protect that commitment. Providing the best benefits to our returning war fighters, their families and veterans is a top priority for Rooney.

If you need assistance please [contact](#) our office or visit our Veterans Service webpage by clicking [here](#) .